



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Bob Thorpe Introduces Bill to Preserve Voting Rights for College Students

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – At the request of his constituents, Rep. Bob Thorpe (R-06) introduced [HB 2260](#) (voter registration; student addresses) which addresses several problems with voting in Arizona's college towns, while ensuring that voter rights are preserved for all.

“After hearing from concerned residents of college communities, and from election officials about the disenfranchisement of college students during the last election, it was clear that a bill could clear up many issues,” stated Thorpe.

During the 2016 General Election, students were encouraged to vote, but it was discovered later that their provisional ballots were not counted. As a result, while they believed that they were participating in our democratic process, they were denied that opportunity. Thorpe believes that if they had been advised to obtain an absentee ballot, there would have been much less confusion. Thorpe's bill is based upon the following:

1. During the last general election, university students, who were not registered to vote or were physically outside of their voting district, were still encouraged to go to local polling places and requested provisional ballots. In many, many cases, their votes were discarded. Not only did this cause more work and delay for election officials to tally the votes, but these students did not even know that their votes were not counted. Students need to understand how and where they should register and vote.
2. Students should be encouraged to register to vote at their primary address, where their vote will have the greatest impact on issues that directly impact their families, neighbors and community. And registering for an early ballot will give them the flexibility of simply mailing their vote within about a 30-day period of time.
3. Arizona voters requested help because they are very concerned that when part-time students, who do not live full time within these communities, vote within local elections,

it greatly reduces the influence of the fulltime local citizens concerning the outcome of their local elections. These citizens feel disenfranchised.

Thorpe will meet with stakeholders early this week to discuss how to possibly amend Arizona's voter registration forms to make it easier for students to identify their primary address for registering to vote, and if they wish, to list their dormitory or other temporary address, where they can receive their early ballot in the mail.

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